

KYNETON & DISTRICT OLD TIME DANCE CLUB INC.

'KEEPING IN TOUCH' (No. 2) – 27 APRIL 2020

After circulating the first 'Keeping in Touch', it was really overwhelming, how many people responded really positively and it was obvious that people were missing the regular contact with dancing and dancers – the dancing itself, the company, the camaraderie and the OTD family, the music, the exercise and the relationships between us all.

Given the number of responses and the content of the messages received, it seems necessary to follow up on the first newsletter, which was really more about sounding out whether it was a good idea than a reporting of news, with another to share what people had said before it becomes 'old news'.

A sincere thank you to all who responded and were so encouraging to our first letter. Send me your news or little items, so that we can get up a May edition of 'Keeping in Touch' if lockdown is still happening.

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There was a lovely text from **Ray Sharrock** (from Bendigo). It was Ray's 80th birthday on 1 April. He said that he appreciated this opportunity to thank so many people for their wishes and for giving him such an amazing birthday. However, he has also shared many beautiful thoughts, which I will copy as he wrote it. (It is also on our website.)

He said, "I have not been big on birthdays even though I was one of those very lucky people to have the 'best' parents. My father died when I was 12 and I think of him every day, my mum died at 95 and I have never had a negative thought of either of them. My mum gave me many great things in my life and none were better for me than getting me to learn Old Time Dancing in the Nyah hall in 1952, shortly after my dad died. This has led to a lifetime of the magic of OTD and fun and caring people that make up OTD, be they dancers, those who provide the music or those who sit and watch. I have had a fear of birthday parties and have avoided 75 of them. This one, however, I was looking forward to, fully expecting it to be celebrated at a dance with many of the 200 mid-Vic (and Melbourne) people I have been befriended by over the past three years in mid-Vic., truly an environment of great passion and wonderful people. So, how to celebrate something so special for me when I can only ask one person along? I settled on a day trip to a fish farm over Smeaton way. The venue was voluntarily closed but graciously opened for the day for myself and for Jan, thankfully, as I had recently had surgery on both eyes and was unable to drive. We were invited to bring a picnic hamper as the restaurant was closed due to corona. We had a great day and caught several fish. Jan's first fish ever! The great highlight of the outing was a list of some 200 names of the people who have come into my life in the past three years of OTD and jailhouse rockers and bush dancing, and we were able to enjoy a memory of each, including the ten that have passed away. LOTS A LUV. RAY and JAN"

(What a lovely letter. Thank you, Ray, for sharing such wonderful memories and thoughts. We certainly look forward to celebrating your birthday with you and Jan whenever we are able to get together again.)

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Ina Bartram (from Trentham) broke her pelvis in late March and spent two weeks in hospital, which she said was a fascinating experience in the middle of Covid-19. Each patient was only allowed one visitor, Graeme was her registered visitor and had his temperature taken and was quizzed on recent contacts and movements whenever he arrived to visit, but once he had his 'visitor' sticker, he could go anywhere. Staff had to go through the same process, but were then able to work as normal - without special distancing, masks or PPE. Ina has been home for a couple of weeks, with a wheelie walker and lots of medication. She says that she has no memory of the events leading up to how the break happened, she has completely lost more than 24 hours before she 'came to' in a bed in the emergency department. She was not unconscious at any time, talked to Graeme, the first responders, the ambos and the emergency department staff, but just can't remember anything about the 2 – 3 days leading up to it. As she says, a fascinating experience, but one she does not wish to repeat. Ina would be very happy to talk to anyone who would like to ring her on 54241449.

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Jo White (Melbourne) told me that **Marie and Robert Waller** (Broadmeadows) were having some health problems, so I contacted Marie and had a long chat with her. She said that she had spent a week in hospital after operations to remove cancers on her leg and arm. Her daughter, Anne, who was visiting from Katherine, and was staying with them, then stayed on to look after her. During a visit to Marie's specialist, Anne discovered she had a spot on her shoulder that needed attention, and shortly after they received a phone call that Anne had 15 minutes to get to the hospital to go to theatre. Anne then had to spend a few days in hospital. Whilst all these things were happening, Robert was admitted to Epping Hospital with a stone in the gall bladder. Tests showed that he also had cancer in the liver. Consequently, he had his gall bladder removed and 25% of his liver cut out, spending 48 hours in Intensive Care, before being moved to a ward. He is still in hospital, but Marie said he must be getting better as he has now become grumpy. (Update 28/4 – Robert is now having 4 hourly obs., so things are improving – heading in the right direction.)

Marie was out for a walk on the wheeler, which the hospital had given her because her leg was still recovering, with her daughter, Anne. She got a bit tired, so Anne told her to sit on the wheeler seat, but, when she did, the wheeler took off backwards. When Anne tried to stop the runaway wheeler, it ran over her foot, which is still black and blue. Marie then fell off the wheeler onto the ground. She said that luckily she had track suit pants on so that she was not totally exposed as she lay on the ground. Then some kind gentleman helped her up, after Anne had asked for assistance, and they eventually got home. Good on you, Marie, for being able to laugh at the situation and herself. Anne is now stuck in Victoria because of travel restrictions, which is very lucky for Marie - if not for Anne. (This would go well as a skit on 'Mad as Hell' or some similar program. A comedy of errors!)

HOT OFF THE PRESS – Robert is back at home (29/4) – in pain but back at home. Get well soon.

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June Wishart and Robbie Wright are staying at home in Castlemaine, missing dancing and the social aspects of getting together. Robbie is battling health wise, but is keeping positive and can still have a laugh. June has just been presented with a little great grandson, her 15th great grandchild. Robbie also has lots of great grand children, so it becomes difficult to remember who is who and who belong to whom. They were very pleased to hear some news of our dancing fraternity.

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Some of you will have seen this, as it is a Leunig cartoon from the Melbourne Age of 16 March. A bit outdated but should give you something to chortle at. We thought it was funny.

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Pam Brooks (Riddells Creek) is being extremely conscientious about self-isolating at home. She is, however, suffering from a very sore hip, she is having a cortisone injection next Thursday, let's hope this helps. She said there is a funny thing going on at the estate she lives in – a very bright pink bean bag appeared on her nature strip, which she thought someone had dumped and wasn't very happy about. However, the next morning it had gone, but, while she was out for a walk, it was on the nature strip in a different court and then the next day, it was sitting in the driveway of a different house. ('The Mystery of the Travelling Bean Bag' – sounds like an Enid Blyton book to me).

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Barry and Matilde Birmingham (Sunbury) say they are going well and staying as safe as possible, but missing the dances. However, they are catching up on jobs at home, so it's not all bad. Barry says you feel as though you would like more freedom to go wherever, but we are all in the same boat.

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John and Jill Bennett (New Gisborne) have been doing a variety of new things and catching up on all the things they have been deferring since they started dancing, said it's a long list. John felt that it would be good to hear how you are all filling in the time at home now that our external physical social contacts have been cut off for the time being.

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Nerine and Daryl Hodson are relocating from Castlemaine to Bendigo, and are also expecting a new grandchild, so lots happening for them. Moving house is high on the list of stressors, so all the very best for an easy transition. A grandchild is a thrill – I think it may be their first, which is an even bigger thrill. Thankyou both for putting this letter onto the K&DOTDC website.

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Bill Hickey said that he is missing the dances and the chance to catch up with people. He also said that the ladies from Trentham, who meet to prepare the supper before the dances there, have said they are missing the social aspect of getting together in the afternoons of the second Friday each month.

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Joyce Bloomfield was due to have eye surgery, but this has been postponed. She was struggling at home in Kilmore, so has moved to stay with her daughter in Hopper's Crossing whilst the isolation is in place. It is good that she is being looked after as she has not been in the best of health since she nearly gassed herself a couple of years ago.

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Good to hear from **Barbara Poulton** (from Melbourne), who had her appendix out in February, but then had serious complications during the recovery period and was most unwell. She is back at home and says she is much improved now thankfully. She said that it is such a pity that we are all housebound, missing the usual outings, family, friends and dancing, which hopefully we can return to before too long.

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I caught up with **Elaine Cocks** (Kyneton) when I dropped her off a copy of the newsletter. She asked me to say hullo to all her dancing friends, and tell you that she is managing alright. When I saw her, she was raking up the autumn leaves in her front yard and the street drain in front of her place looked immaculate. My Steve (Kelly) has always said that you could eat your dinner off Elaine's front drain, she looks after it so well. It is nice to see that she is keeping up the good work.

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Lois Makepeace and Noel Aplin (Bendigo) seem to be quite happy self-isolating. Noel said that they go for walks at Crusoe Lake, sit and have a talk halfway and watch the birds, then finish their walk. It is a lovely bush area that they are walking in. They are, like us all, missing the dancing and catching up with friends. As Lois said, we will have a big catch up when there are no longer restrictions.

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Clare Claydon and Win Westerhoff (from out Redesdale way) are enjoying themselves on their property, with their garden and horses, and making the most of the quieter life style that is the new normal. Clare thinks they might stick more to this way of life as the future gets back to "normal". They found on an old dance instruction DVD demonstrations of how to do a 'free' foxtrot, and have enjoyed teaching themselves how to foxtrot efficiently.

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Enid Farmer (from Kyneton), who broke her toe very badly just prior to the lockdown of dancing, is now out of her moon boot and walking much more freely, better able to be her normal busy self, involved in so many things, although currently there are obviously not many activities still open.

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Clive Niemann and Anne (Bendigo) are both well and keeping amused with gardening, watching TV, walking and Clive is doing some bike riding, but they are missing dancing. Clive has put posts on Mid Vic Dances page, with links to K&DOTDC web page. Many thanks, Clive.

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Jack Dalton (Wheatsheaf) is now back at home after his stay in hospital having emergency heart surgery, but is finding it difficult and frustrating to adjust to not being able to easily do the things he was able to do previously. He said he has taken on the home schooling of his granddaughter.

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Carmel Haugh (Beveridge) had a fall and broke her wrist, which resulted in 8 weeks recuperating, then straight into the self-isolation. She is recovering, but missing her OT and Irish dancing friends.

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Bill Darling (Kilmore) has moved to a retirement village in Kilmore. The residents have been allowed to form small clusters for social contact from their front porches. His cluster was not very social so, when it was not happening, he went around the corner to a different cluster, but got into trouble from management and was sent back in disgrace to his own porch. Otherwise, he is doing well and quite happy in his new abode. I hear that he is making himself garden beds with help from his son.

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Bill sent me this - ('Slinte Mhath' means 'Good Health' - similar to 'Cheers')



*The supermarket was sold out of spray disinfectant so I had to improvise. It is a comfort to know that those little germs will die happy. With the queues at Dan Murphy's perhaps the idea is catching on!
Slinte Mhath
Bill*

(Fancy a Scotsman wasting good whisky on germs.)

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Frank Teven (Ballan), who had a strange turn at the last Daylesford dance which resulted in him having to spend a few days in Daylesford Hospital, said that the problem was caused by a badly infected toe, which is now better. However, he has found out that he has diabetes, missed an appointment to see the appropriate person at the local health centre, and is now having to manage his own diet and test his own sugar levels as, due to the coronavirus, he can't get another appointment. From what he says, he seems to be doing quite well and sounded happy.

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Paul Mallia (Bendigo) is still having problems with his broken foot, it is not healing as well as it should be and he is not able to walk freely yet. He may need a plate and pins inserted but hopes not.

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Sarah Hargreaves, from Tylden, who had been in UK and Spain when the lockdowns started, said that before this happened she had spent three weeks in UK – staying in Nottingham, at Ayr in Scotland amongst other adventures, before leaving Manchester for Malaga and spent four days horse riding in the Andalusian Mountains – she was the only guest here as the others had cancelled because of the virus. She spent four nights in Seville, which she said was lovely, however everything, except the supermarket, closed down on the Sunday, the day before she flew out of Madrid to Dubai, where the airport was in full swing. She arrived back in Melbourne on Wednesday 18 March when she had to go into home quarantine, as previously reported.

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Norma Proctor (Kyneton) is well and keeping busy, she gave me a packet of Anzac biscuits when I saw her out with her wheeler at the local bakery. She's so resilient, bounces back from everything.

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Greetings from all of the above, and also lots of other folk who have made contact and been very encouraging. These include – **Elvie and Ken Chakley, Heather Reest, Cherry, Kay Morely and Graeme Reynolds, Barry Thomson, Sue Carthew, Luba, Helen Bollen, Jo White and Keith Bell, Joyce and Graeme Orr, Angela Turner, Angela van Orsouw, Margaret Gray, Lorraine McPherson, John Code, Marie and Don Clifford**. There seems to be a lot of cupboard cleaning and other chores going on during this enforced shutdown.

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Barbara Poulton (as above) and another friend of mine each sent me similar words of wisdom about going crazy in the current isolation situation, slightly different, so I have incorporated them together.

LOCKDOWN

Just be very careful because people are going crazy from being in lockdown.

Actually I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and all of us agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything, and certainly not to the fridge, as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. I did discuss it with the Hoover, he was very unsympathetic..... told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all blow over soon. The toilet looked a bit flushed and didn't say anything when I asked its opinion, but the door knob told me to get a grip. Meanwhile, the blender has mixed feelings and the taps keep running hot and cold about the idea. The whisk refused to talk about it because she didn't want to whip things into a frenzy, and the eggs kept quiet because they didn't want to get a beating. I didn't check with the oven because she's far too hot-headed, but the freezer just gave me a frosty reception. The tin at the back of the cupboard, with no label on it, thinks it's a total mystery, the knife made some very cutting remarks, although the squash was very cordial about it all. Unlike the lemon, who was feeling very bitter, while the front door said I was unhinged and the curtains told me toyes, you guessed it..... pull myself together. I'm more confused than ever!!

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Here's hoping that sometime soon some of the restrictions will be lifted, at least enough to allow us to have a cuppa together or meet in the park for a chat. I'm not sure about the dancing, as it is certainly a contact activity, and most of us more or less fit into the 'senior' demographic. Personally, I would prefer they err on the side of caution rather than rush into lifting the precautions that have worked so well up to date. Whatever happens, we have been so lucky to have controlled it to the extent we have – compared with so many other countries.

It will be great to get together again, so much to talk about. Will we be fit enough to dance? Will we remember how to? How nice will it be to hear the words 'Take your partners for' and our lovely musicians strike up the band for us. Until then- keep in touch, relax, keep safe and sane.

(If I'm smart enough, I am attaching a video to those of you with the internet. Hope you enjoy it.)

Julie Wilson (If you have any news, contact me on 0400 126 870 or juliewilson40@bigpond.com)

